



# International collaboration leads to arrest of child sexual abuser in Portugal

23 January 2020

Year-long global investigation focused on a darknet site known as 'Babyheart' and its administrator, 'Twinkle'.

LYON, France – Today, the Portuguese Judicial Police hosted a media event to show how international cooperation led to the arrest of two men who sexually abused children.

The event, hosted at the Portuguese Judicial Police Headquarters in Lisbon included INTERPOL, Europol and US ICE, each of which had an important part to play in the events leading up to the arrest of the offenders in 2017.

Those events were the culmination of a year-long global investigation by various police agencies into the child abuse darknet site known as 'Babyheart' and its administrator, known as 'Twinkle'.

Working collaboratively and using the [secure information exchange systems provided by INTERPOL](#) and Europol, investigators from different agencies including US ICE, Austrian Bundeskriminalamt, French Gendarmerie, Italian Polizia di Comunicazioni, UK National Crime Agency and West Midlands Police, Australian Federal Police and Queensland TaskForce Argos, Canada's Toronto Police Service and the Brazilian Federal Police gathered intelligence.

That intelligence pointed at the user Twinkle being the administrator of the 'Babyheart' darknet site who sexually abused children and posted images of that abuse on the site. However, he was using the anonymity of the TOR network to protect himself against the efforts of investigators.

He further claimed to be using advanced methods of encryption and counter-surveillance to ensure that he would not be detected or prosecuted by law enforcement. He gave limited details as to his actual identity and

made finding himself more difficult for investigators by providing misleading information in online posts, messages and through the child abuse material he claimed to have produced.

Careful analysis of the intelligence provided by all the law enforcement agencies involved, including pictures and video files led to a breakthrough. The location of the suspect was then narrowed down to Portugal.

The Portuguese Judicial Police took control of the investigation and engaged with the prosecutor's office. Further criminal intelligence analysis by experts at INTERPOL, Europol, and US ICE led to significant new information about the suspect and the victims that he was believed to be abusing.

Thanks to this cooperation the suspect was arrested and charged. His electronic devices were seized and examined, leading to the identification of seven victims directly related to him.

Commenting on the case, Valdecy Urquiza, Assistant Director of INTERPOL's Vulnerable Communities unit, said: "This case required input and support from so many different stakeholders – it was a textbook example of how international collaboration can put harmful individuals behind bars. We look forward to building on this experience in order to protect more children from sexual abuse."

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